

Remarks

This paper is in response to the Office Action mailed on November 8, 2005. In this paper, claims 1 and 4 are being amended and claims 7-12 are being added. In view of the amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6 and consideration and allowance of claims 7-12.

In the Office Action, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hibbler et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,806,371). Hibbler et al. discloses a gear drive including a threaded adjustment ring 60 with ring threads 30 and a thrust surface that constrains a bearing assembly. The ring threads 30 mate with threads of a housing bore to provide adjustable float and preload of the bearing assembly. A sealing member adjacent the adjustment ring engages both a housing member surface 32 and a shaft 20 extending through the adjustment ring 60. Hibbler et al. does not describe whether the sealing member is carried or attached to the adjustment ring. However, the description of use appears to require the sealing member is inserted into the housing bore after the adjustment ring is set in place. (See Hibbler et al., col. 4, lines 26-40) Accordingly, the sealing member disclosed in Hibbler et al. cannot be affixed to or carried by the adjustment ring.

A preferred embodiment of the present invention includes at least one shaft seal carried by an inner axial surface segment of said threaded adjustment ring and mating with the drive shaft mounted within the adjustment ring. (See Fig. 2 and page 4, lines 16-19 of Applicant's disclosure.) As discussed above, Hibbler et al. does not disclose a shaft seal carried by the adjustment ring. Moreover, the shaft seal disclosed in Hibbler et al. does not even touch an inner axial surface segment of said threaded adjustment ring, and thus does not even suggest such an arrangement.

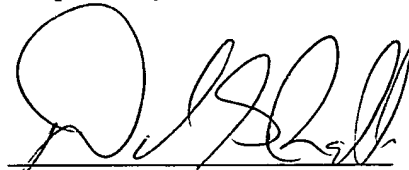
Claims 1 and 4 are being amended to more clearly claim the preferred embodiment of the present invention by including the limitation of at least one shaft seal carried by an inner axial surface segment of said threaded adjustment ring and mating with the drive shaft mounted within the adjustment ring. As discussed above, Hibbler et al. does not disclose or suggest this limitation. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1 and 4 are allowable over the cited reference. Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 depend from one of claims 1 and 4, which as discussed above are believed allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, in

view of the amendments to claims 1 and 4 and the above remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Claim 7-12 are being added to recite the additional limitation of a lubrication reservoir, shown in Fig. 2 and described on page 4, line 20- page, line 2 of Applicant's disclosure. Hibbler et al. does not disclose or suggest a lubrication reservoir as claimed in these new claims. Accordingly, consideration and allowance of claims 7-12 are respectfully requested.

In view of the above remarks and amendments to claims 1 and 4, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6 and consideration and allowance of claims 7-12. No additional fees for filing this response are believed to be due. However, if such fees are due, including extension fees, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to deposit account no. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel G. Radler', is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel G. Radler
Reg. No. 43,028
Quarles & Brady LLP
411 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
Tel. No. (414) 277-5749